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UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 001283

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR INL/PC FOR CHRISTINE CLINE AND NEGAH ANGHA
DEPT FOR INL/C/CP FOR JOHN BRANDOLINO, ROBERT GIFFORD, DAVID LUNA
AND DIANE Kohn

E.O. 12958:N/A

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SNAR](#) [AR](#)

SUBJECT: ACTIVE ABROAD, STYMIED AT HOME; ARGENTINA'S ANTI-CORRUPTION OFFICE STRUGGLES TO CHANGE A CULTURE OF CORRUPTION

REF: SECSTATE 43557

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On June 26, Ambassador Wayne met with head of the Office of Anticorruption, Dr. Abel Fleitas Ortiz de Rozas to discuss possible increased cooperation on anti-corruption issues. Fleitas highlighted his office's very active participation in international anti-corruption conventions, but stressed the importance of working bilaterally with the U.S. to combat corruption. He described his office's efforts to change the current Argentine cultural tolerance of corruption through promoting transparency, prevention campaigns, improved investigations, and more efficient prosecution. Fleitas had three specific requests for assistance: a series of digital video-conferences on cross examination/expert witnesses, attending the next conference of the Council on Government Ethics Law (COGEL), and participating in the State Department's International Visitor programs and other exchange programs. Post has already facilitated contact with COGEL and will work with the Office of Government Ethics in Washington to facilitate the DVC series, as well as consider OA staff for IV programs. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On June 26, Ambassador Wayne and emboffs met with head of the Office of Anticorruption (OA), Dr. Abel Fleitas Ortiz de Rozas. (See SEPTEL for background of the Anticorruption Office.) Fleitas opened by describing some of the challenges Argentina faces in its fight against corruption: a general public tolerance of corruption, the lack of a culture of transparency, and a slow and cumbersome legal system that hinders his office's ability to successfully prosecute cases. He mentioned that, while his office has brought many cases to trial, there are far fewer convictions. Fleitas requested USG assistance in strengthening the OA's skills in oral arguments, particularly related to cross-examination and their use of expert witness testimony. He was interested in Ambassador Wayne's offer to facilitate a series of digital video conferences with our Department of Justice on the topic.

¶3. (SBU) Fleitas highlighted his office's very active participation in international anti-corruption conventions. He mentioned Argentina's participation in the Conference of State Parties (COSP) related to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), the Mechanism for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (MESICIC), and the OECD's Anti-bribery convention. He cited Argentina's participation, along with the USG, in the pilot evaluation program of the UNCAC.

He expressed appreciation for the USG's leadership role in promoting these conventions and gratitude for our recent offer of assistance with the UNCAC checklist (REFTEL).

¶4. (SBU) Ortiz de Rozas also discussed the OA's efforts to change the current Argentine cultural tolerance of corruption through promoting transparency, prevention campaigns, improved investigations, and more efficient prosecution. He expressed admiration for what he called the U.S. culture of transparency and its history of whistleblowers, and discussed a few recent projects to raise awareness of the problems of corruption. Fleitas expressed interest in attending the annual conference of the Council on Government Ethics Law (COGEL), which includes as a member the U.S. Government Office of Government Ethics - a long-time partner of the OA. He also expressed interest in how participation in international exchanges and visitor programs might help improve the expertise of his staff.

¶5. (SBU) Post has already facilitated contact with COGEL for the OA and passed the conference registration form and schedule to Fleitas's office. Post plans to work with the Office of Government Ethics in Washington to facilitate the DVC series, which may involve some coordination with the Department of Justice. Post will work with the LEGATT to identify appropriate experts on oral proceedings. Post will also continue to consider OA staff for IV programs and other professional exchanges.

Wayne